

O 010824Z AUG 05
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8487
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 005352

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI KING FAHD DIES, ABDULLAH ASCENDS THE THRONE

11. (U) Classified by Ambassador James Oberwetter. Reason 1.4 (B and D).

12. (C) The Royal Diwan announced on August 1 that Saudi King Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud has died. The announcement was read on Saudi state television at 10:00 AM Riyadh time. According to our sources in the Royal Diwan, King Fahd passed away at 9:00 PM on July 31. The King had suffered from generally failing health over the last 10 years, after experiencing a stroke in 1995. The announcement did not give the immediate cause of death. However, King Fahd had been hospitalized for the past two months and was reportedly unconscious and able to breath only with the aid of a respirator for at least the last several weeks. Fahd was reported to be 83 years old at the time of is death.

13. (C) According to the public announcement, the burial will take place tomorrow in the afternoon. The prayer service will take place at the 'Asr prayer, at approximately 3:30 PM tomorrow, August 2, in the Prince Turki Mosque in the old city neighborhood of Riyadh. The late king will probably be buried in Riyadh at the Al-Oud cemetery, although this has not yet been announced.

14. (U) The Royal Diwan has also announced the ascension to the throne of Prince Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, formerly Crown Prince. In the same statement, the Diwan announced that the members of the Royal Family had sworn the oath of allegiance (Arabic: "bay'a") to Abdullah in his capacity as the new king. Subsequently, King Abdullah named Prince Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, formerly Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, as the new Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister.

15. (C) No announcement regarding the position of Second Deputy Prime Minister has been made, nor did the announcement provide any information about whether the new King and Crown Prince have relinquished command of the SANG and the Ministry of Defense, respectively.

16. (U) According to the Royal Diwan's statement, starting on Wednesday after the noon day Dhuhr prayer, King Abdullah and Crown Prince Sultan will receive oaths of allegiance from Saudi citizens at the Government Palace building in the old city neighborhood of Riyadh. It is anticipated that the new king and Crown Prince will receive the citizens' "bay'a" oaths of allegiance for two to three days, and that thousands of citizens, including senior tribal shaykhs, military officers, and government officials, will swear allegiance.

OBERWETTER